REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 11, 17, 19, 20, and 24 are amended herein. Claims 1, 11, 17, 19, 20, and 24 have been amended to incorporate substantially the subject matter of claim 3. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found in the claims as originally filed, and particularly in claim 3. Claim 3, which was indicated to contain allowable subject matter, has been placed in independent form. The amendment to claim 3 is thus merely cosmetic and unrelated to patentability. Reconsideration is requested based on the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Response to Arguments:

The Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the consideration given to their arguments, and the withdrawal of the previous grounds of rejection.

Objections to the Claims:

Claim 24 was objected to for various informalities. Claim 24 was amended in substantial accord with the Examiner's suggestions. The Examiner's suggestions are appreciated. Withdrawal of the objection is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112:

Claims 5-8, 16, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. An explanation of the embodiments claimed in claims 5-8, 16, and 21 appears, inter alia at page 29, line 12 through page 31, line 2 of the specification, for the enlightenment of those skilled in the art. If any further explanation is necessary, the courtesy of a telephone call to the undersigned representative of the Applicants is earnestly solicited. Withdrawal of the rejection is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claims 1, 2, 11-15, 17, 19, 20, 24, 25, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Nishijama et al. US 5,253,303 (hereinafter "Nishijama"). The rejection is traversed to the extent it would apply to the claims as amended.

Claim 1 recites,

"comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence."

and,

"extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence."

The recitation "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," and "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence," are supported by claim 3, which was indicated to contain allowable subject matter at page 7, paragraph 8 of the Office Action. Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," or "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence," as implied by the indication that claim 3 contained allowable subject matter. Claim 1 is submitted to be allowable as well, for at least those reasons attributed to claim 3. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1 and adds further distinguishing elements. Claim 2 is thus also submitted to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2 is also earnestly solicited.

Claims 11-14:

Claim 11 recites,

"comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence."

and,

"extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," or "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence," as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Claim 11 is submitted to be allowable, for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 11 is earnestly solicited.

Claims 12, 13, and 14 depend from claim 11 and add further distinguishing elements. Claim 12, 13, and 14 are thus also submitted to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection of

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claims 12, 13, and 14 is also earnestly solicited.

Claim 15:

Claim 15 recites,

"changing the first segmentation area when a second segmentation area cannot be segmented corresponding to a feature amount of a category from remaining areas of the image."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "changing the first segmentation area when a second segmentation area cannot be segmented corresponding to a feature amount of a category from remaining areas of the image," as recited in claim 15. In Nishijama, rather, no mention is made of the possibility that a second segmentation area might not be segmented at all.

Thus, even if, as asserted in the Office Action at page 5, paragraph g, Nishijama's teaching that "segmentation point of a character is determined when noncoincidence count is minimum," implied that "when the first portion of a character does not have the minimum difference value between the normalized value and the standard pattern, the segmentation point cannot be determined," as asserted in the Office Action, that still does not amount to a teaching that the remainder of the portion should be further evaluated, let alone a showing that "changing the first segmentation area when a second segmentation area cannot be segmented corresponding to a feature amount of a category from remaining areas of the image," as recited in claim 15. Claim 15 is submitted to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 15 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 17:

Claim 17 recites,

"comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence."

and,

"extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," or "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest

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difference level from the correspondence," as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Claim 17 is submitted to be allowable, for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 17 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 19:

Claim 19 recites,

"comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence."

and,

"extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," or "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence," as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Claim 19 is submitted to be allowable, for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 19 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 20:

Claim 20 recites,

"comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence."

and,

"extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," or "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence," as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Claim 20 is submitted to be allowable, for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 20 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 24:

Claim 24 recites,

"comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence."

and,

"extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "comparing a difference level between the feature amount of the category and the feature amount of the image corresponding to the correspondence," or "extracting an optimum correspondence indicating a lowest difference level from the correspondence," as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Claim 24 is submitted to be allowable, for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 24 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 25:

Claim 25 recites,

"segmenting the character string image based on the best matches."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests, "segmenting the character string image based on the best matches," as recited in claim 25. In Nishijama, rather, a segmentation position of each character is merely *detected* if a character on lines is detected on the basis of the line P not exceeding the width of one character. In particular, as described in Nishijama at column 3, lines 23-31,

> As described above, if the distortion function is unknown, a character on lines is detected on the basis of the line P not exceeding the width of one character, and the detected signal is normalized and subjected to the character recognition processing. In this case, on the basis of the position of each line at which a difference between the normalized value and the standard pattern, i.e., the noncoincidence count is minimum, a segmentation position of each character is detected.

Thus, in Nishijama, a segmentation position of each character is merely *detected* if a character on lines is detected on the basis of the line P not exceeding the width of one character. No mention is made of "segmenting the character string image based on the best matches," as recited in claim 25 at all. Claim 25 is submitted to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 25 is earnestly solicited.

Claim 26:

Claim 26 recites,

"segmenting the character string image based on the best matches."

Nishijama neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests, "segmenting the character string image based on the best matches," as discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 25. Claim 26 is submitted to be allowable, for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of claim 25. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 26 is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter:

The Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claims 3-8, 16, and 21 contain allowable subject matter, and the allowance of claims 9, 10, 22, and 23. Claim 3 has consequently been amended to include substantially the subject matter of claims 1 and 2, and the rejections of claims 5-8, 16, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph are believed to have been addressed above.

Conclusion:

Accordingly, in view of the reasons given above, it is submitted that all of claims 1-26 are allowable over the cited references. There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 20 OC 05

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